

(a) whether the Government are aware that a large number of units in small scale sector do not get their dues in time from Public Sector Undertakings and private industries;

(b) if so, whether the problem of such small ancillary units have been studied in depth by the working group;

(c) if so the details of the main findings and recommendations of the working group on the subject matter; and

(d) the details of action plan/fresh initiatives finalised to protect the interests of small scale units in regard to timely payment of dues by PSUs and others?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The working Group on SSIs for the Ninth Five year Plan has observed that the existing law on delayed payments enacted in 1993 was not being invoked properly mainly on account of the reluctance of the small parties to invoke the provisions of this law. The Working Group felt that it would be necessary to provide teeth to the Legislation through certain well devised measures such as:

(i) All payments made beyond a fixed period of say 60/90 days should unfailingly attract mandatory interest of 5% over and above the prime lending rate of the bank.

(ii) The balance-sheet as well as Annual Report of the buyer company/department should necessarily bring out the details of the SSI bills remaining unpaid and the payments made with delay.

(iii) Notices issued for raising public issues/fixed deposit and those issued for raising money from the market through bonds should also reflect the above mentioned position.

(iv) All returns etc. filed with the Company Law Board (CLB) should also contain the aforesaid details as a matter of course so that anyone who wants to know the position of any company in this respect can easily do so by inspecting the documents filed in the CLB.

(v) State Small Industries Corporations and the National Small Industries Corporation which provide marketing assistance, should be enabled to sue the buyers on behalf of the SSI units.

(d) It is proposed to examine the matter in consultation with the concerned Ministries.

Aerated Water

2765. SHRI PRATAP SINGH SAINI:

DR. ARVIND SHARMA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the price elasticity of aerated waters in India;

(b) the impact on sales of aerated waters during the last three years following the introduction of excise duty on aerated waters in 1997-98; and

(c) the possible impact on the growth of the aerated water industry if the rate of excise duty is fixed at 40%, 20%, 10% and Nil?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Ministry of Finance have not conducted any study on price elasticity of aerated water.

(b) Excise duty on aerated waters was introduced during 1970-71. There was no change in the rate of excise duty applicable to aerated waters in 1997-98 budget. Hence, the question of impact of duty rate applicable in 1997-98 on last three years does not arise.

(c) The growth of an Industry depends upon a number of factors and therefore, it may not be possible to indicate the growth of aerated water industry at different rates of excise duty.

[Translation]

Satna Cement Factory

2766. SHRI SUKH LAL KUSHWAHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Satna Cement Factory is not depositing the Income Tax in time;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the date since when the income tax has not been deposited by it; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken against the guilty officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) M/s. Satna Cement Works located at P.O. Birla Vikash, Satna, Madhya Pradesh is a unit of Birla Jute & Industries Limited (renamed from 31.3.97 as Birla Corporation) and assessed to Income-tax at Calcutta. According to information collected, the company has deposited its advance tax and self-assessment tax in time. Further, there is no arrear tax outstanding.

Does not arise in view of the information given in parts (a) and (b) above.

Import of Silk

2767. SHRI S.P. JAISWAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that due to strict rules and regulations in regard to import of silk, it